

BEING INFORMED...



Is the best
shield you
and your
loved ones
have in the
fight
against
HIV/AIDS

You have the right to protect yourself from HIV/AIDS, and you might have questions or concerns such as, "I don't know anything about protecting myself from HIV/AIDS", " My partner is not willing to use a condom", " I am not sure how to use a condom properly," or you might have other questions about using condoms. To help answer some of your questions we have put together this pamphlet. It contains general information about condoms and how to engage in a dialogue with your partner about using them. Keep in mind that condoms are not 100% effective but proper use can increase protection. In the fight against AIDS barring abstinence condoms are the next best thing, as pointed out by the past Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D., Sc. D. in a Congressional Testimony.



CONDOM SENSE

An estimated 1.5 million Americans are now infected with the AIDS virus; 90% of these people do not know they are infected. Yet, most were infected through sexual contact or IV drug use. To reduce your chances of getting AIDS through sexual contact you have three choices:

1. You can choose not to have sex.
2. You can choose to have sex with only one person in a permanent relationship.
3. You can use condoms to reduce your risk when you do have sex.



Condoms can provide very good protection against the AIDS virus when used properly every time you have intercourse.

Condoms provide a strong protective barrier that prevents the exchange of body fluids such as semen and blood.

Condoms can prevent the spread of disease. The AIDS virus, Gonorrhea, Herpes, and other STD's cannot pass through a condom.

Condoms have a very low breakage rate when used correctly.



Here are some situations that may arise when discussing condom use with your partner, along with some suggested answers.

1. Situation: You know condoms ruin the mood. You have to stop and put it on, and that just breaks the mood.

Response: I could put the condom on you as part of foreplay and that would help make it more exciting.

2. Situation: We don't have to use condoms, you can use some other form of birth control. Didn't you tell me that you were on the pill?

Response: Yes, I am on the pill, but that will not stop AIDS or any other STD's. That is why we still need to use condoms.

3. Situation: Condoms don't feel very good, and I don't get the same effect.

Response: Maybe we need to try different brands and different kinds like lubricated/dry, ribbed/smooth and whatever else we can find. We just have to remember not to use lambskin because they don't protect against the AIDS virus.



4. **Situation:** I don't have any condoms, I guess we don't have to use them.

Response: I have some condoms here in my purse/ nightstand we can use.

5. **Situation:** I feel awkward with condoms. How do I use them? I am very uncomfortable with them and besides they don't make them in my size.

Response: Maybe we should look at condoms and play with a few. Stretch them out and see how strong they are. We need to practice with each other and get comfortable with condoms. One size fits all.

6. **Situation:** I don't have any STD's.

Response: You may not have any signs that you have an STD, but you have to remember that STD's may occur without you noticing anything wrong. Maybe one of us has an STD and doesn't even know it. That's why we should still use condoms.

Find condoms you both like. Any latex condom will stop the AIDS virus. Try different brands and different kinds (lubricated/dry, ribbed/smooth, colored, etc).



HOW TO USE A CONDOM

1. Open the package carefully.
2. Squeeze the tip of the condom to remove any air and place the condom over the end of the penis.
3. Continue to hold the tip of the condom and unroll it over the entire length of the erect (hard) penis.
4. After ejaculation (climax) hold onto the bottom ring of the condom and withdraw the penis while it is still erect.
5. Each partner should carry condoms and know how to use them. Condoms can help prevent the spread of AIDS.

*If extra lubrication is needed, use a water-based lubricant with nonoxynol-9. Never use an oil-based lubricant such as petroleum jelly because this causes condoms to break.

For more information contact:

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